

Message Text

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SUBJ: DUTCH DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

1. DURING THE VISIT OF MINISTER OF DEFENSE VREDELING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, HE HAD SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH SECRETARY SCHLESINGER (AM, AUGUST 22), ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HILL (PM, AUGUST 22) AND SACLANT (AUGUST 23).

2. AT THE SECDEF-VREDELING MEETING, BRIEFINGS AND DISCUSSIONS INVOLVED THE SOVIET BLOC THREAT, U.S. INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION METHODS AND THE CONVENTIONAL BALANCE. SECDEF EMPHASIZED THAT ALTHOUGH NATO HAD NOT YET ACHIEVED A BALANCE IN CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITIES, IT WAS WITHIN REACH. FURTHERMORE, NATO MUST DEVELOP WAYS TO USE ITS RESOURCES MORE EFFECTIVELY (100 AIRCRAFT SHELTERS, BETTER AIRCRAFT DISPERSAL PLANS, AN IMPROVED COMMAND STRUCTURE FOR AIR IN THE CENTRAL REGION, AND BETTER ANTI-TANK CAPABILITIES). THE PRINCIPAL FOCUS WAS THE ACE CENTRAL FRONT AND SPECIFICALLY THE LAND AND AIR FORCES OF BOTH SIDES IN THAT REGION.

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VREDELING RAISED THE QUESTION OF INDIVIDUAL NATO COUNTRIES

MAINTAINING COMPLETE MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR A MORE RADICAL DIVISION OF TASKS WITH THE CONCEPT OF SPECIALIZATION. SECDEF AGREED AND EMPHASIZED THE PROBLEM OF INDIVIDUAL NATIONS MAINTAINING LARGE SUPPORT ELEMENTS AND SUPPORT FACILITIES. WHILE THERE WAS LITTLE MENTION OF THE NAVAL SITUATION, IT WAS EMPHASIZED THAT NAVAL FORCES SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN CAPABILITIES. COMMENT: WHILE VREDELING MAY HAVE RECEIVED THE ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION THAT BECAUSE THE U.S. EMPHASIZED THE SIGNIFICANCE TO CENTRAL EUROPE OF FORCE BALANCE IMPROVEMENTS IN LAND AND AIR FORCES, THE U.S. WAS LESS CONCERNED ABOUT DUTCH NAVAL IMPROVEMENT; IN FACT THE U.S. IS FULLY AWARE OF THE VERY REAL PROBLEMS ON THE FLANKS OF NATO AND OF THE NEED TO MAINTAIN STRONG NATO NAVAL FORCES TO COUNTERACT SOVIET MARITIME CAPABILITIES. THE U.S. DOES ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT OF THE DUTCH NAVY, PARTICULARLY AS IT MAY IMPACT ON SPECIALIZATION STUDIES IN THE FUTURE.

3. DURING THE HILL-VREDELING MEETING, MBFR AND MINI-NIKES WERE COVERED ALONG WITH BURDEN SHARING AND OUR CONCERN OVER THE JACKSON-NUNN PROPOSAL. AFTER WELCOMING THE DUTCH INITIATIVE ON SPECIALIZATION, VREDELING WAS CAUTIONED ON ITS DANGERS. VREDELING REPLIED TO THE EFFECT THAT SPECIALIZATION SHOULD DEFINITELY NOT BE USED AS A MEANS TO REDUCE DEFENSE EFFORTS. SPAIN WAS ALSO DISCUSSED IN LIGHT OF THE FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS ON THE RENEWAL OF THE US-SPANISH AGREEMENT AND THE COMMENT WAS MADE THAT THE NETHERLANDS SHOULD TAKE A LOOK AT THE PROBLEM AND BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE NEED FOR U.S. FACILITIES IN SPAIN. VREDELING REPLIED THAT THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN UP WITH THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. ROGERS

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